DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 164 862 CE 018 920

AUTHOR Miller, Harry G.; Torricelli, James
TITLE Adult Education in Thailand.
PUB DATE Nov 78
NOTE 43p.

EDRS PRICE MF-$0.83 HC-$2.06 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS Adult Basic Education; Adult Education; *Adult Education Programs; *Educational Development; *Educational History; *Educational Policy; Foreign Countries; Job Training; Literacy Education; Nonformal Education; Vocational Education
IDENTIFIERS *Thailand

ABSTRACT

To develop background for examining the past, present, and future of adult education in Thailand, the author initially sketches an economic and geographic profile of the country. In the second of five sections, Thailand's adult education movement is traced by examining the influences of kings, the Buddhist religion, various governments, and the citizens. There is an emphasis on the history of the development of literacy and vocational education programs. The author also focuses on the historic role of the Adult Education Division (formed in 1940 as a part of the Ministry of Education) in setting educational objectives. Finally the 1973 revolution and the educational reforms which followed are discussed. Section 3 reviews the Adult Education Division's current sponsorship of three program types: general education, skill training, and general knowledge/information. Section 4 examines the development of a non-formal education program by the Adult Education Division. Approved in 1973 by the World Bank, the program is described as multipurpose and involves three network tiers in (1) five regional, research, development and training centers, (2) provincial and some district lifelong education centers, and (3) rural adult centers. The final section summarizes twelve points of interest to American adult educators and includes fourteen discussion questions. (CSS)

**********
* Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made *
* from the original document. *
**********

ED164862

# ADULT EDUCATION IN THAILAND

by
Harry G. Miller
Chairman/Professor
Department of Educational Leadership
Southern Illinois University
Carbondale, Illinois

James Torricelli
Director
New Start, Inc.
Springfield, Illinois

November, 1978

CE 018 920

U S DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH, EDUCATION & WELFARE
NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION

THIS DOCUMENT HAS BEEN REPRODUCED EXACTLY AS RECEIVED FROM THE PERSON OR ORGANIZATION ORIGINATING IT. POINTS OF VIEW OR OPINIONS STATED DO NOT NECESSARILY REPRESENT OFFICIAL NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION POSITION OR POLICY

"PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE THIS MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY

Harry G. Miller

TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC) AND USERS OF THE ERIC SYSTEM."

# ADULT EDUCATION IN THAILAND

## Thailand: A Portrait

Larger than the State of California, Thailand has four distinct geographical areas. The north section of the country has a forest region influenced by a series of mountain ranges. Of the four areas, it has the most extreme climate, cold in the winter season and very hot in the summer. Because the north and northeast areas are outside of the Monsoon, they have developed an economy dependent on forestry products such as teak wood which recently have been depleted through a lack of reforestration.

The central plains of Thailand are the most fertile and are the heartland of agricultural production. The most productive area is the Bangkok Delta which is the major rice producing section of the country.

The northeast region, which is the most economically deprived area of the country, is dry and borders with the Mekong River and Laos. Although the poorest section of the country, it is the largest in terms of geographical area and population. It rains less in this area than in any of the other areas of the country. In spite of porous sandy soil, which is not suitable for growing rice which is the main food stable of the country, rice still remains the major agricultural crop of the area. "Consequently, the Northeast has the least agricultural production. A shift of cropping pattern is gradually taking place. Jute, cotton and

watermelon are new for the last decade."[1] Cattle and pig raising is also new and is considered a growth industry for the area.

The penninsular area of Thailand stretches down and around the Gulf of Siam to a shared border with Malaysia. It is in this area that Islam is the principle religion. Although this is a religious minority in comparison to Buddhism, most of the people who live in this area are Islamic. They rely on the sea for their economic livelihood.

Thailand's population, estimated at about 44 million, has been growing at an average annual rate of 3.0% since 1960. It is a country with one of the highest fertility rates, ranking seventeenth among the most populated nations on earth. If the fertility rate continues, Thailand's population will double itself within the next 20 years. A major concern of the government is that economic and commercial expansion must keep pace with population growth to provide the people with a better standard of living. Individual productivity and income needs to be kept in harmony with population growth and with the age distribution of the population.

In economic terms, Thailand is predominantly an agrarian society with most of the arable land used to grow rice. Such crops as jute, rubber, and tapioca are also being grown. Many of the teak forests have been depleted. The weather, especially climate and rainfall, accounts for the specific species of trees and crop production.

---

[1] Keatwa Kanawan, "Foreign Educators' Reports," College and University, 50 (Summer, 1975): 519.

The living and working patterns of the Thai people are directly related to their physical environment which is determined by the availability of land, the amount of rainfall, and the type of climate. In other words, the natural environment of Thailand and its regions is one of the major factors that influences the occupations, population distribution, national economy, living patterns, and aspirations of the people. As such, the "natural environment must be taken into consideration if our education is to be relevant to the basic occupations of the majority of Thais."[1] For the educational system to be effective, it needs to be related to the social, economic, and cultural systems of the country. It is not an end in itself, but rather a facilitator and base for other systems to function. Education does have its own identity which is linked to the society as a whole and to each individual's needs, attitudes and life patterns. As such education preserves society's culture as well as fosters change for society's improvement.

---

[1]Office of the National Education, Education for Life and Society: A Report of the Committee for Establishing the Framework for Educational Reform, Bangkok, The Minister of Education for submission to the Cabinet, 1974, p. 2-3.

## THE HISTORICAL ANTECEDENTS OF THAILAND'S ADULT EDUCATION MOVEMENT

The early history of adult education in Thailand is undocumented and has been related by means of stories and legends. When the Burmese invaded Thailand and captured Ayutthaya, the ancient capital city, for a second time in 1767, most of the government records were destroyed with the evacuation of the city.

The documented history of adult education can be traced to the building of a new capital city in Bangkok in 1782. The construction of the new capital required the recruitment and training of many craftsmen. Skilled workers were needed in such areas as drawing, sculpturing, carving, masonry, lathe operation, mould making, casting, sheet metal work, goldleaf and glass decoration and cutting and painting. This apprenticeship training was used until King Rama V in 1871 when an educational system was introduced. Schools were established to train civil service workers while some were established to teach engineering trades and fine arts.

It is speculated that Thailand's cultural preservation and education were based strongly on the influence of Buddhism. The Buddhist temples were a primary force in directing and institutionalizing Thai Education. These religious meeting places were the first and primary educational institutions for children and adults alike. The major objectives were to provide educational experiences in moral development, vocational skill training and the teaching of self-defense. For all practical purposes, education was only for male members of society.

For those not attending and living in temples, parents and families provided the educational training needed. Vocational training was passed on via a father-to-son, craftsman-to-apprentice and generation-to-generation basis. Historical evidence showed that this education was quite informal and offered only limited subject matter. With families living together in the same households, family members shared the work responsibilities and taught one another work skills. In other words, parents played an important role in the education of their children.

It was during the 1850's that Western thought began to challenge traditional Thai culture. Small groups of European missionaries as well as American Protestant missionaries settled in Bangkok. Many of these missionaries were doctors who brought medicine and health care to the sick. They also brought the printing press to publish religious materials and newspapers to evangelize spiritual salvation.

Before his death in 1851, King Nangklao (Rama III) tried to preserve the Thai standards of religious discipline and scholarship when he founded a Buddhist academy in the Temple of the Emerald Buddha in Bangkok. He ordered that Thai classical poems, proverbs and maxims and traditional medical instruction be inscribed on marble plaques of Wat Pha Getubon. It became a place to gather, learn and worship.

In 1887 the Department of Education was established and five years later it became the Ministry of Education. Textbooks were written in Thai and a national system of examination was instituted.

The first vocational education project was initiated in 1898. According to this effort, vocational education included:

1. handicraft (carpentry, blacksmithy, leatherwork, tailoring, etc.)

2. agriculture (farming, gardening, etc.)

3. home affairs (house management, cooking, clothing, etc.)

Schools for these vocational skills were established and officially called Silapasastr Suksa Sathan. Several years later a commercial trade focus was added to the curriculum.

Prince Damrong, in 1899, founded a school of higher education named the Royal Pages School or the Rongrian Mahatlek Luang which provided a three-year program for future civil servants of the Ministry of the Interior. The school was located in the Palace and intended to train prospective civil servants for the reform movement of modernization initiated by King Chulalongkorn. During the third year of the three-year program, students were attached to the provincial administration as probationary deputy district officers in order to practice in the field what they had learned in the classroom. This was equivalent to an internship.

In 1910, the school was joined with the Sirirat Medical School and the Teachers' Training School which had been founded in 1889 and 1892 respectively. This reorganized educational institution became known as the Civil Service School or the Rongrian Kharatchakan Phonlaruan.

The Education Plan of 1913 which was approved by King Mongkut's son, King Chulalongkorn, established the first Thai university in 1916. The Faculty of Engineering and the Faculty of Art and Science were added to the Medical and Public Administration sections of the Civil Service School. This School was renamed Chulalongkorn University and was located in Bangkok.

With the Compulsory Education Act of 1921, a law was passed that stipulated that all children, both boys and girls, from the age of seven to fourteen, were required to attend a government-sponsored school if able to do so and if there was a school to attend. This requirement was changed

in 1933 so as to place the compulsory age limits from eight to fifteen. For the first time girls were allowed to receive formal public education and to develop their academic skills in an educational setting.

The People's Party Revolution in 1932 which abolished the absolute monarchy established a quasi-parliamentary constitution. To implement economic and educational reforms, secondary school education was expanded and Tammasat University was formed to promote law and political education.[1] Other universities were formed during this period from the influence of Pridi Phanomyong, who was one of the major civilian leaders of the People's Party.

The government did not recognize the need to organize education for the out-of-school population until 1937 when the first national census revealed that 68 percent of the population over ten years of age was illiterate. The position of the government was that it was difficult to develop the country and raise the standard of living at a satisfactory rate with a large illiterate population. The government, therefore, granted the Ministry of Education permission to establish adult education programs which were coordinated from a newly-created division in the Office of the Undersecretary of the Ministry of Education in 1940. The main objectives were to eliminate illiteracy and promote an understanding of ethics and morality.

The relationship between economic development and literacy in Thailand was being proposed. The type of education and the potential impact of education was recognized as an influence for socio-economic development.

---

[1]Osamu Akagi, "Higher Education in Asia: The Historical Development of Thammasat University," Research Bulletin of the National Institute for Educational Research, Tokyo, Japan, March, 1977, p. 41.

With the realization by governmental leaders that over 50 years of public education still left a large segment of the population illiterate, a major educational thrust specifically designed for adults was needed.[1] To combat the illiteracy problem, the government initiated in 1940 a national adult education program to teach basic skills and to foster a stronger sense of civic responsibility among the adult population.

As a special division within the Ministry of Education, the Adult Education Division was charged with the task of developing and implementing literacy programs to those over fifteen years old and not enrolled in any formal school system. A national law was passed making literacy compulsory for all Thais. Teachers were recruited and hired on a part-time basis for the program from all available teaching personnel. Further, educational funds were given to each province to establish literacy classes in as many villages as possible.

The literacy program consisted of two courses (a Preliminary Course and a Final Course) each being six months long. Both courses emphasized Thai language skills (reading, transcription, writing, and composition), arithmetic, civics, moral education, geography, history, and health. The courses were held on an average of three days per week, one or two hours per session and usually scheduled in the evening to allow those working an opportunity to attend. Certificates equivalent to Second and Fourth grade were issued to adults who successfully passed the final examinations for the Preliminary and Final courses.

---

[1]The standard means to determine literacy was based on the completion of at least two years of primary education.

During the first three years of the program, the literacy rate increased over 20 percent, as 1,409,688 adult graduates of the two-cycle program were pronounced literate. The severe economic depression caused by World War II, however, forced the government to abolish the compulsory education law and to encourage voluntary involvement. The lack of financial support coupled with an economic depression engulfed the country and caused the government to place its attention and resources in other needed areas.

After World War II, in the latter part of the 1940's, the adult education program was restored by the Thai Government. The UNESCO's model of Fundamental Education was adopted by the government and provided the major direction for program delivery. The UNESCO's Fundamental Education emphasized the basic knowledge that adults should possess which includes reading, writing, arithmetic, geography, history, civics and morality, and vocational education. Fundamental Education was essentially basic literacy skills and vocational education for adults. For this new program, the Adult Education Division established five major objectives:

1. Promote literacy skills
2. Promote occupational skills
3. Foster responsible citizenship in a constitutional monarchy
4. Encourage a more prcductive use of spare time

The vocational emphasis in the Thai secondary schools was recognized in the 1936 National Education System. Secondary vocational schools were established and program curricula were developed and implemented under the supervision of the Department of Education in the Ministry of Education. Vocational education was later brought under the Department of

Vocational Education in 1941. These facilities, faculty, and programs gave added support to the UNESCO's emphasis on vocational education for adults.

The Adult Education Division's implementation of its vocational and literacy program stressed the following areas:

1. Agriculture - Topics typically included were vegetable gardening, animal husbandry, disease control and basic horticulture.
2. Handicrafts - Topics were based on interest of teachers and participants and included such activities as embroidery, sewing, basket making, weaving and pottery.
3. Home Economics - Basic homemaking and cooking were topics taught in this segment.
4. Fisheries - Developing and maintaining fish ponds were taught, especially to farmers and rural villages.
5. Commerce - The presentation of elementary accounting and marketing were included in this area of the curriculum.
6. Special Vocational Interest - Vocational topics deemed important to participants were accommodated and taught in the program.

A public library system was initiated by the Division of Adult Education in 1948. Provincial and district libraries were established in whatever facilities were available. These efforts were designed to support the literacy program and to provide closer relationships with rural populations.

In 1954, the Thai Government established the Thailand-UNESCO Fundaemntal Education Center (TUFEC) in Ubol Ratchathani province. The Center's

purpose was to train people who would be involved in adult education programming in rural areas. The primary concern was to raise the standard of living. The establishment of the Center provided a means to direct resources in, and provide leadership for, rural development. By 1956, the Adult Education Division had expanded its programs and operations to the extent that a revision of objectives were needed. They were:

1. to improve rural living standards
2. to provide vocational and general education opportunities for adults in cooperation with other government agencies
3. to promote educational opportunities for rural residents through mobile vocational units and expanded public education (audio-visual presentations) programs
4. to operate public libraries and develop reading materials for adults
5. to produce and distribute audio-visual materials for use in educational programs
6. to develop responsible citizenship and occupational skills, and
7. to conduct research and training programs

The Fundamental Education effort was more successful with literacy programs than vocational training. Lack of equipment and qualified teachers hindered vocational instruction. However, more than 170,730 adults did complete the literacy program.

Thailand during this period had initiated a national community development program which was made a function of the Ministry of the Interior. The community development program focused on a wide variety of projects and activities. These initial efforts only achieved moderate success.

Difficulties were partly caused by the war and the limited resources available for improvement projects. It would not be until the 1950's that a national coordinating committee was appointed to allocated resources, sponsor training programs for rural administration, and initiate special projects for improving the standard of living in rural villages.

Prior to 1965, the Adult Education Division had initiated two types of literacy programs which included a program for urban and provincial town residents and a program for rural districts and villages. These programs differed not only in the population served, but also in the types of programs delivered. The urban program stressed academic subjects and consisted of three program levels equivalent to the elementary and lower and secondary school certificates. The rural program continued to use the Fundamental Education program which consisted of two program levels.

In November 1965, the Asian Ministers of Education met in Teheran, Iran to discuss common educational issues and specifically to explore issues concerning adult literacy. A resolution made by the Ministers at the Teheran conference indicated the importance of vocational training which is based on community and regional resources and needs and the teaching of literacy skills as it relates to vocational training. The resolution did not separate literacy education from vocational training but rather emphasized the need to interrelate the two.

The Adult Education Division piloted a new program, based on the Teheran resolution, in northern Thailand. Vocational training and literacy classes were held five days a week for 2 1/2 hours a day. The pilot program enrolled more than 452 adults. From the success of this initial pilot program new programs were started.

Several problems were encountered from the operation of this pilot effort. First, the teacher's ability to teach both vocational and literacy skills was more difficult than anticipated. It was found that teachers may have had the necessary ability to teach reading and writing but lacked the specific vocational knowledge needed to be effective. In the rural areas especially, the inexperienced teachers had difficulties in establishing their credibility with farmers who frequently knew more about agriculture than they did. The problem was compounded by the high regard rural Thai farmers had of teachers who they regarded as having superior knowledge.

Second, the pilot program attempted to use local resource people in assisting with the instructional process as a means to relate to vocational backgrounds and to give additional instruction. There were just not enough such resource people available in rural areas to give this type of instructional assistance.

Third and last, the program tended to use a textbook approach to teaching. This frequently resulted in a greater emphasis on literacy than on improvement of vocational skills. It also did not provide for the transfering of knowledge to the participants' daily life needs.

It was during the 1960's that the Thai government embarked upon plans to provide higher education opportunities outside the immediate Bangkok area. The advantage of establishing provincial universities was to offer people educational opportunities beyond the secondary school in their own regions as well as to provide means for the cultural and economic development of an area. In keeping with this objective to provide higher education to the rural areas of Thailand Chiengmai

University was founded in 1964, in the North, Khon Kaen University was established in 1965 in the Northeast, and Songkhla University was opened in the South in 1968.[1]

Also, by the mid 1960's a wide variety of adult education programs had been developed. These out-of-school programs included both those sponsored by various governmental ministries and those functioning under an apprenticeship training system. The teaching of vocational skills through apprenticeships was widely used among the Chinese community in Thailand.

In the government, four ministries offered out-of-school programs through a total of seven different units for both the adult and young adult. Additionally, nineteen other governmental units offered instructional programs. Among others, these units included the army, the police, the state railways, religious customs, and hospitals. These adult education programs generally emphasized the teaching of specific skills and technical training and in 1968 included over 12,000 participants.

The four ministries and the respective units responsible for adult education were the following:

1. Ministry of Education
   a. Division of Adult Education in the Department of Elementary Education
   b. Division of Vocational Promotion in the Department of Vocational Education
2. Ministry of Interior
   a. Skill Training Center in the Department of Labor
   b. Rural Leadership and Vocational Training Centers in the Department of Community Development

---

[1] In addition, Thailand has established such degree granting higher education institutions as the Police Officer School, the Air Force Officer School, the Navy Officer School and the Army Officer School.

3. Prime Minister's Office
   a. Rural Youth Vocational Training under the National Youth Promotion Committee
   b. Vocational Training Center under the Accelerated Rural Development
4. Ministry of Defense
   a. Vocational and Training Centers in Sensitive Military Areas

The overall types of out-of-school programs, especially in the vocational field were definitely an important step in the educational development of the country. Although there has been an expansion of adult programs for the general public, the programs still only occupied a small proportion of the total formal educational system. Whereas the formal education represented 18% of the 1971 national budget, the adult education budget was less than 1.6% or only 0.3% of the education budget.

The fragmentation of the out-of-school programs due to the lack of inter-unit cooperation among governmental agencies was another limitation on the total educational effort for adults in the country. This frequently resulted in duplication of programs, use of the same training facilities and implementation of a limited definition of adult education.

During the 1960's, Thailand's government officials had implemented two National Educational Development Plans as a part of the country's national Social and Economic Development Plan. The First Educational Development Plan (1961-1966) had as its primary purpose the expansion of enrollments at all educational levels as well as to improve the quality of public education being offered. Although these objectives were maintained in the Second Educational Development Plan (1967-1971), special emphasis was given to the development of administrative manpower.

Education for rural development was also emphasized to lessen the wide difference of income between the rural and urban areas and the agricultural and industrial sectors.

The 1973 October Revolution, initiated by university students, focused on the need for social reform. This seemingly uneventful student unrest soon opened the way for the rural and urban populas to express their displeasure with the military government. The major social concerns confronting the Thai people included an inequitable tax system, lack of educational opportunities at all levels, unfavorable trade balance, lack of democratization at all levels of government, and an unequal distribution of wealth between rural and urban areas.

Specifically, some of the educational issues were:

1. half of the 11 to 13 age group were enrolled beyond the fourth grade in school.
2. the educational quality especially in provincial towns and rural areas was poor due to irrelevant curricula, inadequate materials, and the need for more teachers.
3. educational opportunities, and in particular secondary and higher education, was concentrated in the Bangkok area where only 10% of the nation's population occupied over 60% of the secondary education opportunities and 85% of the higher education enrollments.
4. only 2% of the adult population have educational opportunities which are related to their daily living needs.[1]

---

[1] World Bank, Thailand: Appraisal of a Fourth Education Project, Education Projects Division, East Asia and Pacific Region, Report No. 613a - TH, p. 4.

With these pressures as a backdrop to the formation of an interim government, several reform committees were established to draft recommendations and develop appropriate courses of action.

For education, the government issued the following statement:

> This Government will make all attempts to hasten its pace in giving education to and inculcating the Thais to have democratic outlook and support democracy; in stressing the significance of moral and cultural aspects of education for the sake of a decent living in life . . . as for higher education, the Government will promote academic and administrative autonomy of universities as well as supervise and promote private colleges so that they are qualified to confer degrees . . . The Government will also lay down policy guidelines and implementation measures for educational reform.[1]

The Cabinet in a June, 1974 meeting approved and gave consent to appointing an educational reform committee known as the Committee for Establishing the Framework for Educational Reform. The Committee was given authority for considering educational reform for both formal and non-formal education. It sought the opinions of over 150 Thai educational leaders as well as a wide range of documents, research, and legislation.

Nine Sub-Committees were created by the Committee to facilitate its analyses. Each Sub-Committee was presided over by a number of the Committee for Establishing the Framework for Educational Reform. The nine Sub-Committees were:

1. Sub-Committee for the Study of Equality in Education.
2. Sub-Committee for the Study of Social and Physical Environments which have an Impact on Education.
3. Sub-Committee for the Study of the Structure of Education System and Education Administration.

---

[1]Office of the National Education Commission, Education for Life and Society: A Report of the Committee for Establishing the Framework for Educational Reform, Bangkok, Thailand, December 4, 1974, p. c.

4. The Sub-Committee for the Study of Educational Content and Learning Process.
5. The Sub-Committee for the Study of the Role and the Status of Teachers.
6. The Sub-Committee for the Study of Higher Education.
7. The Sub-Committee for the Study of Private Education.
8. The Sub-Committee for the Study of Investment in and Benefits from Education.
9. The Sub-Committee for the Study of Education Law.

By December 1973, the Committee had completed its work and submitted to the Cabinet a 350-page report entitled Education for Life and Society: A Report of the Committee for Establishing the Framework for Educational Reform. The report, divided into three parts, consisted of a discussion of the importance of education in Thai society, the relationship between social environments and education and the changes needed to improve the Thai educational system.

Some of the comments and recommendations outlined in Education for Life and Society concerning adult education were the following:

1. It was recognized that it was necessary for educational opportunities for adults to be available outside of the state public school system so as to enhance social change and provide means for improving daily life needs.
2. With regard to adult education and the need for out-of-school programs, the Committee recognized the urgent need to provide educational services to more than 15 million rural adults who possessed less than a full primary education. With a population growth of over 3 percent per annum, the

rapid population expansion created severe problems for education as well as for economic and commercial development. The need to attack the illiteracy problem especially in rural areas was particularly acute. With the vast majority of rural people having only limited literacy skills and facing an expanding population, new and creative systems for delivering programs need to be developed. Also means need to be designed to prevent those who have finished primary schooling from lapsing back into illiteracy. It is estimated that over 30 percent of the graduates from primary school lapse into illiteracy. Certainly limited access to newspapers, books, magazines and other experiences supports illiteracy.

3. For effective adult education programming, coordination and cooperation from both government agencies and the private sector was recognized as necessary. Many of the ministries sponsored some form of adult education programs including public health, agriculture, education, universities, and labor. In addition, such international organizations as UNESCO and private foundations also sponsored programs for the out-of-school adults. These efforts needed to be coordinated to be effective.
4. Apart from government agencies, it was recommended that mass media, namely, radio, television, and newspapers can play an important role in promoting and providing adult education to the people. Although little effort has been given to utilizing the media for organized learning, such

programming holds the potential of reach people in remote areas and especially in rural areas. It was further recommended that these programs should be incorporated with and supportive of other programs rather than be presented separately.

5. Programs need to be organized for all adults and the government is responsible for assisting in the organization and delivery of such programs. The programs need to be designed for the majority of people, those who have completed compulsory education as well as those who have not.
6. A basic objective of programs specifically designed for adults is to develop "the people's knowledge and ability in thinking, analyzing, and solving problems which face them in real life. This ability to think and to solve problems will enable the people to move with the world, which is changing rapidly, while not being exploited but rather receiving social justice."[1] Moreover, non-formal programs need to be developed which are based on the needs, interests, and aptitudes of those who are to benefit from them.
7. Various social societies and religious institutions expecially Buddhism need to direct their resources and abilities for the development of communities and education. The Wats, which are religious centers, need to continue to serve as a

---

[1] Education for Life and Society, p. 5-58.

place of worship and learning. Its historical use as an educational center is an important aspect of adult education today.

8. Adult programs, it was emphasized, should not be based on a fixed curriculum but rather on what people want to know. Frequently, this will mean community and rural base programming and subject matter that relates to their everyday life.

The Education for Life and Society report was a unique educational effort which brought together the educational leaders of Thailand to provide a concerted programmed effort. As one reviewer noted, "despite the fact that more analysis is still required in certain areas (particularly in respect of teacher education, higher education and educational resources), and despite the fact that perhaps insufficient attention was paid to the problem of priorities, it is generally accepted that the reform committee's work heralds a new educational era in Thailand."[1] It was this report that laid the bases for government program implementation as seen in World Bank applications, UNESCO funding and governmental reorganization. The Project for the Development of Non-Formal Education in Thailand presented to the World Bank by the Division of Adult Education proposed to establish a national system of adult education.

---

[1]Nichols Bennett, "Educational Reform in Thailand," Education in Asia, 8 (September, 1975): 12.

ADULT EDUCATION TODAY IN THAILAND

A number of adult education programs are in operation today in Thailand and encompass a broad range of activities. The Adult Education Division sponsors three types of programs which include general education, skill training, and general knowledge and information.

The general education program is a program geared to provide school completion education for adults. These programs range from pre-literacy to the end of secondary education. Adults who complete the programs receive certificates of completion similar to those issued to formal school graduates. Further the curriculum is patterned after the school curriculum but is modularized to facilitate part-time learning.

At present, the program is divided into four levels with level 1-2 equivalent to grades 1-4, level 3 equivalent to grades 5-7, level 4 equivalent to grades 8-10, and level 5 equivalent to grades 11-12. The Ministry of Education provides payment of teacher's fees, teaching materials and supervision of the program. Classes are typically held in existing school facilities or in other government buildings.

The general education is undergoing revision with a change from an academically oriented program of studies to more functional content. The purpose is to make the content more relevant to the conditions and problems in adult life everyday. The new curriculum is to encourage adults to be creative and to be problem solvers - or as it is frequently called "Khit-Phen". That is, a person who is equipped to acquire further knowledge and to function effectively in society. As Saroj Buasri's book,

A Philosophy of Education for Thailand: The Confluence of Buddhism and Democracy, describes the Buddha's method of learning and thinking is closely related to the western concept of problem solving. The Four Noble Truths given Buddha after given his enlightenment resemble the structure of the problem solving method. The four are Dukkha, Samudaya, Nisodha and Magga. These steps correspond to the nature of the problem, experimentation, and analyses and conclusion. Buasri presents a comparison of these steps and illustrates how the practice of yoga and tapas relates to the searching for possible solutions.[1]

The skill training programs in specific subjects are especially designed for out-of-school populations and to provide job training. These programs are short term in nature and based on the occupational skill needs of the geographical area and the participants.

One type of adult vocational program is the stationary school which uses secondary vocational school facilities at night. A second type of program consists of mobile vocational units which are portable and are taken to distant villages to provide training to people who normally do not have much spare time or who cannot easily obtain access to vocational centers. The mobile units generally offer 7 to 12 programs which include auto mechanics, radio repair, cooking, dressmaking, barbering, motorcycle repair, and agriculture. Mobile trade training schools are a third program which offer skill training to adults. These programs have larger communities and tend to provide a wider selection of occupational offerings.

---

[1]Saroj Buasri, A Philosophy of Education for Thailand: The Confluence of Buddhism and Democracy, Bangkok, Thailand, Ministry of Education, 1976, p. 53.

Disseminating up-to-date information concerning the country is also an operational function of the Adult Education Division. This effort is generally realized through public libraries, newspaper reading centers and educational radio and television programs.

A public library service was initiated in 1948 through provincial governments which were provided with a budget to establish and operate libraries at both provincial and district levels. At present there are 71 provincial libraries and 267 district libraries. Usually, these libraries are located in urban areas. In addition mobile libraries are operated from vans and boats.

The village newspaper reading center program is also another approach for disseminating knowledge and information. Because most rural residents have little opportunity to acquire information about socio-economic changes that occur around them, the Adult Education Division established reading centers. The program was begun in 1971 and also attempted to prevent people from lapsing into illiteracy by encouraging reading. The conditions were that if villagers would build and maintain a building for the center, the Division would pay for daily newspapers, magazines and books to be delivered to the center. The villagers can gain from the reading centers a self-learning process which helps them build up knowledge and skills useful in upgrading their lives.

Educational radio and television programs are also used to distribute information to a large number of people. These two mediums are playing important roles in formal as well as nonformal education. Radio has the advantage in that it can reach areas where other means of communication cannot. Also, radios are inexpensive with most of the rural population able to have one. From a survey conducted by the National

Statistics Bureau in 1974, there were 6,688,501 households in the country and out of this number 4,743,668 households, or 70.9 percent, had radios. Thus, radio has an advantage over other mass media in that it can offer educational opportunities to the majority of the people at little expense.

As for television, even though many limitations do exist such as the fact that the service cannot yet be extended to people in the remote areas; the high cost of television receivers; and the lack of electricity, television is viewed as an effective means for delivering educational programs.

Radio programs are sponsored by Radio Thailand of the Department of Public Relations.

Individuals wishing to enroll in radio correspondence programs send their registration to a program organizer. Depending on the program, registration fees are charged. Handbooks, study guides, exercises, class broadcast schedules, and discussion group appointments are provided. Broadcasts are typically on weekdays with each program broadcast twice daily. The organizer meets students in groups to review lessons and discuss programs.

Several other governmental agencies sponsor adult education programs. These include some of the following programs:

1. An adult literacy program for members of the armed services is conducted by the Ministry of Defense.
2. The Department of Labor's schools for female factory workers provides reading and writing skill instruction.
3. The Department of Religious Affairs provides literacy education for Buddhist priests and uses available space in temples for instruction.

4. The staff from the Department of Vocational Education works with the Adult Education Division staff in developing curricular materials and in the use of facilities for instruction.
5. The Ministry of Industries through radio broadcasting provides information about home industries.
6. The National Development Council provides scholarships for research on adult education programming.
7. The development of literacy materials for the Hill Tribes is directed by the Ministry of Agriculture and Co-operative Affairs.
8. The Penitentiary Department is responsible for providing adult and vocational education for prisoners.
9. The Ministry of Justice sponsors a young adult program in major cities.
10. The training of staff and personnel for working in the area of adult education is being undertaken by the Bureau of State Universities.
11. The Department of Public Relations provides radio correspondence courses for adults.
12. Agricultural extension and training is conducted by the Ministry of Agriculture.
13. The Ministry of the Interior is providing community development activities and vocational training.
14. Community service projects are being delivered by the teacher colleges of the Department of Teacher Training.[1]

---

[1]These include such activities as home economics training, library services for rural areas, nutrition programs, craft instruction, techniques for conservation of natural resources, and raising farm animals.

15. Home bound instruction for adults who live in remote villages.[1]

[1]Teachers are sent to the villages to teach literacy and numeracy skills needed in everyday life. Teachers are sent to work with small groups of adults.

## NEW DIRECTIONS FOR ADULT EDUCATION IN THAILAND

As early as 1974, the Adult Education Division had begun to draft a proposal to expand adult education programs in Thailand. The proposal, after a year of development, was submitted to the World Bank for funds to sponsor research, training and development centers, lifelong education centers and expansion of the radio correspondence program. The proposal was entitled A Project for the Development of Non-Formal Education and was approved by the World Bank in 1976. Funding for the project was projected over a five year period (1977-1981).

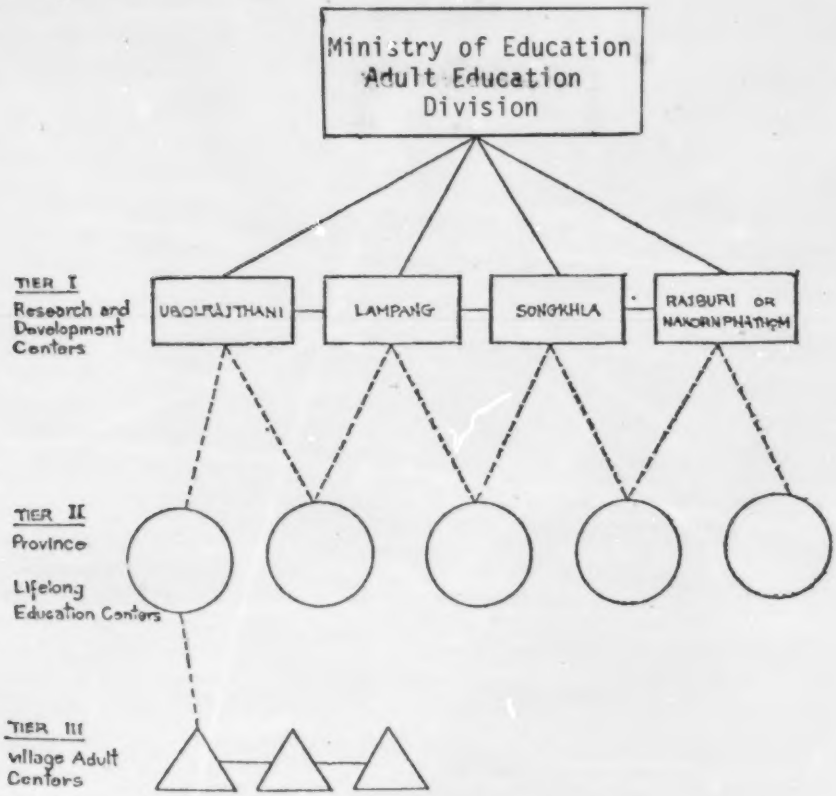
Essentially the proposed project was to develop a multi-tiered and multi-purpose adult education network throughout the country. Three tiers were identified in which two had a primary operational responsibility and function while the remaining tier served a training and materials design function.

The three proposed tiers were: 1) a network of five regional research, development and training centers, 2) a network of lifelong education centers located in each of the provinces and in some districts and 3) a network of rural adult centers which is coordinated and planned by village councils.

The three tiers are graphically presented in Figure 1.

Figure 1

Overview of Adult Education System Proposal




It was planned that the five regional centers would not have program delivery responsibility. Their primary emphasis would be on the research activities, materials design and development of the various activities to be delivered at the other two levels. Further, the regional centers were designated as the unit responsible for the training of adult education personnel.

As a means for providing direct adult education programs to local populations as well as to direct extension services for surrounding villages, lifelong education centers were proposed at the province and

district levels. The overall purpose of this second tier of the adult education system was to promote democracy, increase economic production particularly in agriculture, provide more employment opportunities, improve health and family planning services and strengthen the national culture. It was an assumption of the centers that if the people had opportunities to receive an education that kept pace with rapid societal changes, they would be better able to contribute to national development efforts.[1]

Specifically, the operational functions were to:[2]

1. conduct adult second chance education and literacy programs for local residents.
2. conduct vocational activities for local residents.
3. maintain a public library for local residents.
4. organize various cultural activities intended for the area population.
5. conduct such specialized programs as health, nutrition, and agriculture.
6. provide rural services primarily based on special interests and needs.
7. provide materials for village reading centers.
8. serve as an operational link for radio correspondence programs.

---

[1]Adult Education Division, Provincial Lifelong Education Centers, General Education Department, Ministry of Education, Bangkok, Thailand, January, 1978, p. 1.

[2]A Project for the Development of Non-Formal Education in Thailand, p. 34.

Responsibility for the operation and direction of the centers was placed with the center's staff and provincial leaders. Each center was to have a governing board chaired by the provincial governor with the provincial education officer serving as a deputy. The board was also to include representatives from other governmental agencies delivering adult education programs in the province.

The expansion of the village newspaper reading centers to include a greater variety of adult education programs was the major purpose of the third tier. The proposal stressed the need for experimenting with different modes of utilizing these centers as a means for developing the greatest program effectiveness. A part of the experimentation would be to determine the role of the newspaper reading centers as opposed to other village institutions, e.g., temples, schools, government offices.

To be successful, it was deemed important for the centers to establish a base of local initiative and to provide short courses on subjects of interest to villages. These centers would have a great deal of autonomy in meeting particular needs even though they would work through and in cooperation with the lifelong education centers.

Another aspect of the World Bank proposal concerned the expansion of radio correspondence programs. With over 80% of the Thai population living in rural areas and the limited access these people have to educational opportunities of any kind, the need for greater effectiveness in the radio education programs was apparent.

The advantage of using radio as an educational medium was based on certain factors. It could, for instance, enrich the teaching of certain subjects through short dramatizations. Also, it had the potential of enhancing the instruction given through correspondence courses in

particular course exercises. Whether the radio was used as the sole means of instruction or as a means for enhancing instruction provided in other means, the radio was seen as a valuable and inexpensive means for providing information to adults who had had little or no exposure to educational opportunities.

Finally, the proposed project was designed to generate some financial resources from the fees charged to participants, from the sole of learning materials and the fees charged for demonstration classes. It was felt that this would provide not only greater commitment of participants to the instruction but also would allow some additional funding to sponsor additional programs.

The Project for the Development of Non-Formal Education in Thailand was an attempt to provide greater direction, impact and coordination to adult education especially in rural and remote areas of Thailand. Now that the project has been initiated, its completion has received major priority from the Ministry of Education. The project's comprehensiveness and local involvement is seen as embodying the promise of mass education for adults whether through literacy programs or self-enrichment.

## POINTS OF INTEREST TO AMERICAN ADULT EDUCATORS

From the brief description of the development of adult education in Thailand and current proposals for expansion, the following points should be of interest.

1. The original aims of adult education stressed literacy training and an understanding of the role of the individual in government. These aims were later broadened to include promoting vocational training, using time productively, and promoting better living conditions among the population.

2. Previously, adult education was primarily directed to only those who were beyond compulsory school age. This concept has been expanded to using non-formal educational activities to fulfilling needs of the general population. The scope of adult education has now been extended to out-of-school populations at all age levels.

3. Recognizing the changes occurring within society and the need for adults to adapt, contribute, and solve problems, the adult education program has embarked on the promotion and development of Khit-pen principles.

> A Khit-pen man is one able to adapt himself so as to be able to lead a happy life. A Khit-pen man can see through the problems, locate the causes or the origins of problems, and eventually identify the solutions most appropriate for himself and his community.[1]

---

[1] Adult Education Division, Adult Education in Thailand, 1976, General Education Division, Ministry of Education, Bangkok, Thailand, 1976, p. 1.

In Thai, Khit means "to think." The Thai word pen is an evaluative term implying a satisfactory level of performance. The philosophy of this approach for adult education is to encourage the adult population to improve themselves and their environment in a rational manner. It provides a broader perspective of education rather than emphasizing a reliance on technical training. An emerging goal of adult education, therefore, is to prepare individuals to function effectively within a variety of situations and to be able to seek several alternatives to achieve their needs.

4. The current emphasis placed on rural economic and social development represents a major thrust today in Thailand.[1] Adult education is seen as one way to bring about this development through a variety of programs ranging from literacy training to health care instruction.[2] To achieve this, a high priority is placed on a more equitable distribution of education opportunities as reflected in the 1977 National Education Scheme which includes the following provisions.[3]

> No. 14 - The State shall endeavour to step up and promote various kinds of out-of-school education in order to make available life-long education to all, especially to those who missed the initial formal schooling.

---

[1]Asian Programme of Educational Innovation for Development, Preparing Teachers for Education in Rural Development - A Handbook, UNESCO Regional Office for Education in Asia, 1977, p. 5.

[2]The Fourth National Economic and Social Development Plan (1977-1981) stressed the need for economic development of the rural population with the purpose of increasing the quality of life among rural people. As the Plan states "One of the main policies of the Fourth Plan is to emphasize the delivery of official services particularly to the rural population. This distribution should be as extensive as possible and should harmonize with and provide support for other development schemes included in the Plan." Like other social service agencies, the educational system should relate to local needs of the people and their economic needs.

[3]Ministry of Education, The National Education Scheme 1977, Bangkok, Thailand, July, 1977, p. 4.

> No. 15 - The State shall endeavour to make education accessible to the poor, the physically, mentally and socially handicapped as well as the educationally disadvantaged.

By improving the quality of life within rural settings, the agricultural base of Thailand's economy will be preserved.

5. Adult education is a diverse program which is not governed from any single agency but represents several efforts from private as well as public agencies. Within the last five years, the Adult Education Division has coordinated its activities with other governmental agencies to better insure the delivery of needed programs. The current efforts at local assistance and coordination of programs is a major adult education need and objective today.

6. The current need to provide formal educational opportunities to those Thai youth who are unable to attend universities is an issue that is confronting all geographical areas of the country. By encouraging as well as providing educational opportunities for students in rural areas, more students may take the opportunity to settle in their home area. Currently, only 6% of the students enrolled in higher education (universities) come from farm families even though this group makes up 75% of the population.[1] Expanded educational opportunities which coordinate formal and non-formal educational programs are needed in all areas of learning.

7. Education is only one of the inputs into development and must be related to and linked with other service activities especially for rural development. It is felt that these activities must remain apolitical and based upon serving people.

---

[1]World Book, Thailand: Appraisal of a Fourth Education Project, Education Projects Division, East Asia and Pacific Region, May 5, 1976, p. 9.

8. Programs associated with social services more than likely cannot be confined to the academic calendar of a school or college. Use of facilities and space will be year round. Further, programs may be short or long term in duration. They may be held for one or two days or for several months. They may meet once a week or several times during the week.

9. The content typically associated with social services needs to be based on the needs of participants for whom programs are designed. Frequently these needs are the result of assessments conducted in a specific rural area. In this sense, curriculum and content become solution oriented to the problems faced by people.

10. Instructional methodologies tend to rely on such teaching techniques as demonstration, practice, inquiry and question-answer learning. This applied form of teaching offers participants the opportunity to be directly involved in the learning process. Programs and courses offered in this manner are frequently based on problems or needs which can be resolved through investigation and application.

11. Most of the service programs at the local village level will more than likely have economic importance to a particular region. This will mean close association with people of the area and their attitudes, mores, problems, and aspirations. These activities will present means and ways for people to become more efficient, productive, and accurate in their methods of making a living.

12. The success of adult education activities is dependent on an infrastructure for delivery. Recent proposals for out-of-school populations emphasize the use of existing infrastructures which includes use of formal school facilities in the evenings and involvement of

key personnel at the local level such as religious leaders, police, health and rural extension workers.

The current emphasis given to the delivery of adult education programs is a reflection of the importance placed on adjusting institutional capabilities to meet the needs of people. The success of any program will be measured by the people who implement it and the people who are the beneficiaries of its programs and services. As Thailand faces new challenges, new programs and solutions are needed. This brief overview of adult education in Thailand reflects a country seeking solutions and approaches to changing problems and issues.

## Questions for Discussion

1. To what extent is a nation's economy the difference between a developed and a developing country?
2. What should Thailand's development be towards?
3. What is the relationship between expanded adult education opportunities and a country's economic growth?
4. Can formal educational systems have an immediate effect on rural poverty?
5. Is the educational development of a country independent of population growth?
6. To what extent is literacy training a primary influence on agricultural advancement?
7. What is the appropriate balance between economic growth and population growth?
8. Does economic growth generally precede educational development or does educational development precede economic growth?
9. Is education for work and for participation in cultural and civic life a complementary activity?
10. How can literacy training improve agriculture and thus the economy?
11. How are Thais using and defining the word "non-formal education?"
12. To what extent is Thailand's physical environment an advantage or limitation to her economic development?
13. What is the relationship between the natural environment society, and education?
14. What is the difference between the ideologies of economic development between the West and the Buddhist East?

SELECTED BIBLIOGRAPHY


Adult Education Division. A Project for the Development of Non-Formal Education in Thailand. (Unpublished Document). Bangkok, Thailand: Ministry of Education, 1976.

Adult Education Division. Adult Education in Thailand 1976. Bangkok, Thailand: Ministry of Education, 1976.

Ahmend, Manzoor. Non-Formal Education for Rural Development. Case Study #6: Mobile Training Schools of Thailand. New York: IBRD/ UNICEF, 1972.

Akagi, Osamu. "Higher Education in Asia: The Historical Development of Thammasat University." Research Bulletin of the National Institute for Educational Research. Tokyo, Japan: March, 1977, pp. 40-43.

Arai, Ikuo. "Higher Education in Asia: The Development of Higher Higher Education in Thailand," Research Bulletin of the National Institute for Educational Research. Tokyo, Japan: March, 1977 pp. 35-39.

Asian Programme of Educational Innovation for Development (APEID). Preparing Teachers for Education in Rural Development - A Handbook. Bangkok, Thailand: UNESCO Regional Office for Education in Asia, 1977.

Bennett, Nicholas. "Educational Reform in Thailand." Education in Asia: Reviews, Reports, and Notes. 8 (September, 1975): 5-12.

Bennett, Nicholas, et. al. Problems of Financing the Thai Educational System During the 1960's and 1970's: An Analyses of Past Situation and Projection of Future Needs. Bangkok, Thailand: Educational Planning Division, Ministry of Education, 1972.

Bennett, Nicholas. Problems of Financing the Thai Educational System in the 1960's and 1970's. Paris: UNESCO, 1975.

Blaug, Mark. "An Economic Analysis of Personal Earnings in Thailand." Economic Development and Cultural Change. 23 (October, 1974): 1-31.

Buasri, Saroj. A Philosophy of Education for Thailand: The Confluence of Buddhism and Democracy. Bangkok, Thailand: Ministry of Education, 1976.

The Bureau of the Commission of National Economic and Social Development. A Collection of Articles on Economic and Society. Bangkok, Thailand: The Press of the General Secretary of the Cabinet Office, 1975.

Chandrakant, L. S. Objectives of Cooperation Between Industry and Educational Institution. Singapore: Colombo Plan Staff College, 1976.

Department of Elementary and Adult Education. Education in Thailand: A Century of Experience. Bangkok, Thailand: Ministry of Education, 1970.

Department of General Education. Adult Education. Bangkok, Thailand: Kurusapha Press, 1975.

Department of Technical and Economic Cooperation. Thailand: Facts and Figures. Bangkok, Thailand: Government House Printing Office, 1974.

Fuller, W. P. Research for Education Planning in Thailand: Comments for Education Council. Bangkok, Thailand: Ford Foundation, 1972.

Gray, Audry W. Bibliography on Education in Thailand. Office of Education: United States Operations Mission to Thailand, 1970.

Havelock, R. G. and Huberman. Solving Educational Problems: The Theory and Reality of Innovation in Developing Countries. Paris, France: UNESCO, 1977.

Huq, Aminul. Approaches to Institution-Industry Cooperation. Singapore: Colombo Plan Staff College, 1977.

Kanawan, Keawta. "Foreign Educators' Reports," College and University. Vol. 50, No. 4, Summer, o975, pp. 517-523.

Literacy in Asia: A Continuing Challenge. Report of Regional Experts Meeting, November 22-28, 1977. UNESCO Regional Office for Education in Asia and Oceania, Bangkok, Thailand, 1978.

Low, Guan Onn. Technician Education and Industry Co-operation. Singapore: Colombo Plan Staff College, 1975.

Manone, Carl J. The Improvement of Education in Rural Thailand - A Multi-Dimensional Approach. Bangkok, Thailand: Unites States Operations Mission, 1973.

Marcus, Edward and Marcus, Mildred Rendl. Economic Progress and the Developing World. Glenview, Illinois: Scott, Foresman and Company, 1971.

Meesook, O. A. The Formation of Income in the Household Sector in Thailand. Washington, D. C.: The World Bank, 1976.

Ministry of Education. Educational Development in Thailand: 1973-1975. Bangkok, Thailand: Report to the 35th Session of the International Conference on Education, Geneva, September 1955.

Ministry of Education. History of Ministry of Education: 1892-1964. Bangkok, Thailand: Kurusapha Press, 1964.

Ministry of Education. The National Education Scheme 1977. Bangkok, Thailand, July, 1977.

National Economic and Social Development Board. Summary of the Third Five-Year Plan. Bangkok, Thailand: Office of the Prime Minister, 1972.

Office of the National Education Commission. A Research Report on Higher Education System: A Case Study of Thailand. Bangkok, Thailand: Office of the National Education Commission.

Office of the National Education Commission. Education for Life and Society: A Report of the Committee for Establishing the Framework for Educational Reform. Bangkok, Thailand: Office of the National Education Commission, 1974.

Office of the Prime Minister. Government of Thailand. The Fourth National Economic and Social Development Plan (1977-1981). Bangkok, Thailand: National Economic and Social Development Board, 1976.

Sargent, Sir John and Orata, Pedro T. Report of the Mission to Thailand. Paris: UNESCO, 1949.

UNESCO. "Education in Asia." UNESCO Regional Office for Education in Asia. 7 (March 1975).

U. S. Department of Agriculture Economic Research Service. The Agricultural Economy of Thailand. Washington, D. C.: January, 1972.

World Bank. Thailand: Appraisal of a Fourth Education Project. Report No. 613a-TH, East Asia and Pacific Region, May 5, 1976.

Wronski, Stanley P. and Panich Sawasdi, Kaw. Education in Thailand: Secondary Education, Manpower and Educational Planning in Thailand. Bangkok, Thailand: Thai Watana Panich, 1966.

Wyatt, David K. "The Beginning of Modern Education in Thailand: 1868-1910." Ph.D. dissertation, Cornell University, 1966.